

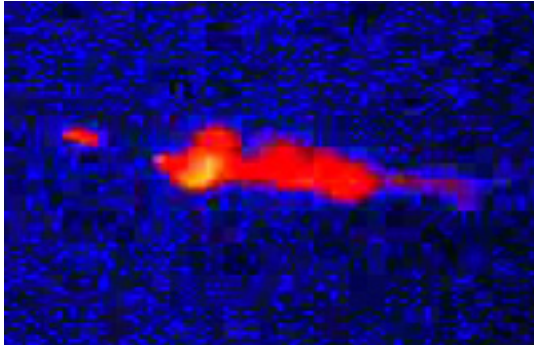
Congress on Brink of Cutting Missile Defense

You may have recently [read](#) about a dispute between the U.S. and Russia concerning our nation's plan to bolster our missile defense capabilities in Europe. The planned missile defense system is designed to help protect against possible enemy attacks. In particular, Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology threatens our national security and our European allies. Russian President Vladimir Putin strongly opposes the missile defense plan, and has suggested that the deployment of this capability in Poland and the Czech Republic would undermine regional stability and could spark a new arms race. Importantly, our nation has offered to share the missile defense technology with Russia. Many believe President Putin's concerns are unfounded and that his rhetoric is needlessly overheated. I share that view, and believe our nation should stand firm and move forward with developing this capability.

Unfortunately, some in Washington believe we should not move forward, at least not now. Earlier this year, the House passed a [defense spending bill](#) that would cut funding for the European system by \$236 million, including \$85 million for site construction. A

[Senate bill](#)

that establishes overall defense policies calls the missile interceptor system "premature" and would require a study to determine whether other missile defense capabilities make the planned European interceptors unnecessary. These actions, if enacted into law, would prevent our nation from proceeding with the European missile defense system for at least a few years.



Missile just before interception during test

It is true that our missile defense capabilities are multi-faceted. Some [missile defense systems](#), such as

But I believe it would be shortsighted and unwise to shortchange funding for systems, particularly the interceptors we want to place in Europe, which would target longer-range missiles when flying far beyond the atmosphere. Some argue that these systems are unnecessary because only a few countries currently have the capability to unleash a long-range weapon. But I believe we should begin preparing now for future threats, especially since Iran

reportedly could have long-range missiles as early as 2015. This threat alone provides a compelling reason for our nation to develop state-of-art missile defense technologies with diverse capabilities that could repel enemy attacks.

An effective missile defense system is technologically achievable and is the last line of defense against possible attacks against Americans and our allies. As the legislative process on the House and Senate measures continues, I will be actively supporting efforts to reverse this misguided course and allow the European system to proceed without delay.